

CONFEDERATE PRISONERS

DRAWER 10B

CONFEDERATES, SURVEILLANCE

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# Abraham Lincoln and Confederates

## Confederate Prisoners

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

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## AN APPEAL TO LINCOLN.

Pathetic Letter Written by George D. Prentice in Behalf of His Son.

One of the Sad Chapters of the Civil War—Divided Families of Kentucky—The Career of Clarence J. Prentice in the Confederate Army.

Special Correspondence of the Globe-Democrat.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 19.—Whilst delving through the Government archives in search of historical papers for a forthcoming volume of the rebellion records relative to prisoners of war, I recently found a singularly interesting—not to say dramatic—letter, written over thirty years ago by that famous and eccentric editor, George D. Prentice, to President Lincoln. On a piece of soft newspaper, evidently laboring under the strongest emotions and acting on the impulse of the moment, with his editorial pencil Mr. Prentice penned the following impassioned appeal to the President:

"LOUISVILLE, KY., April 28, 1863.—President Lincoln: DEAR SIR—It is long since I wrote you. In some things I have differed with you. I think you know I have differed with pain, with great pain. I have tried to serve my country. I know that I have served it. I will not undertake to say how much. Mr. Lincoln, I have a great favor to ask of you. Hear me. My only child, Clarence J. Prentice, God help him, is a Major in the Confederate service. A few weeks ago he came into Kentucky, and, being cut off from his command, he came by night to his home to see me and his mother and his baby. He was seen coming and in a few hours was arrested. He is now at Camp Chase, and his mother in Columbus he desires, I know, to serve no longer in the war. He would be a great loss to the Confederates. For he has been one of their most efficient officers. I do not suppose, Mr. Lincoln, that you can parole my boy, upon taking the non-combatants' oath, to remain in the United States, though I should be most happy if you could. But I fervently appeal to you to let him go, upon his taking the simple oath, anywhere outside of the United States and of the rebel Confederacy. I know his plans. His mother will go with him, and he will never hear arms against us again. I will be surety for this with fortune and life. I have written to Gen. Burdette to let my son remain at Camp Chase till I hear from you. Please let it be soon, for I am most unhappy. Ever your friend, GEO. D. PRENTICE."

### A SAD PHASE OF THE WAR.

This letter vividly recalls one of the saddest phases of the great civil war, in partially illustrating its effects on society in the border States, and especially in Kentucky, where it not only caused discord and rancor between neighbors and friends, but deadly feuds and breaches in families. It is a queer fact that the President of the United States and the President of the Confederate States were both Kentuckians. George D. Prentice, long a resident of Kentucky, but born in Connecticut, was a Union man within limitations, whereas his only son at the very outbreak of the rebellion cast his fortunes with the Confederacy. Hon. John J. Crittenden, the old Senator and distinguished publicist, himself a Unionist, howbeit much given to compromises in the interest of peace, was the head of a divided family. One of his sons, Thomas L. Crittenden, was a conspicuous Union Major General, while another son, Geo. B. Crittenden, educated at West Point, held a Major General's commission in the Confederate army, and was the personal friend of Jefferson Davis. Both brothers, by the way, were unfortunate in their military ambition. In his first battle, which by a strange coincidence took place on his native Kentucky soil at Mill Springs, where he commanded the Confederate army, George B. was badly defeated and routed, and thereafter fell into disrepute with his Government. On the Union side Gen. Thos. L. practically disappeared after his unaccountable disaster at Chickamauga.

The Breckinridges are another illustration of how Kentucky families were split up in the war time. The greatest Breckinridge of them all, Robert J., was an uncompromising Union man, whose personal influence was largely potential in holding Kentucky firm. His nephew, the Hon. John C. Breckinridge, ex-Vice President, was from the beginning a leading spirit of the Confederacy both in council and camp, commanding troops as Major General in many battles, oftentimes successfully, and going down in the final wreck as its Secretary of War. He, too, was

a popular Breckinridge in Kentucky, but he failed to carry any considerable number over with him in 1861. Some of the younger generation of Breckinridges were also facing each other from opposite sides of the lines.

### ACTION ON THE APPEAL.

An appeal like that of Prentice's seldom failed of a ready response in Mr. Lincoln's sympathetic heart. The masses knew him, and to him direct the entreaties and petitions of the imprisoned and the condemned always went. Immediate movements in behalf of young Prentice are apparent in the records, although no personal order or indorsement of the President concerning this case is found. Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, was a man of entirely different mold—unrelenting and inflexible in the prosecution of the most rigorous measures for the suppression of the rebellion, even in their application to individual cases. He viewed every rebel as an actual criminal, and had very little compassion for those in limbo. And they seldom appealed to Mr. Stanton for clemency. But he understood the good President's womanish weakness in the presence of human suffering, and yielded his own judgment to Mr. Lincoln's requests or orders in behalf of prisoners and other unfortunates in the hands of the military.

An inquiry as to the status and previous history of young Prentice was directed by the Secretary to the Judge Advocate General of the army. This was the Hon. Joseph Holt, Mr. Buchanan's last Secretary of War—an other Kentuckian, with a stiff, unflinching Union backbone, and one, too, having an intimate knowledge of the various ramifications of blue-grass politics, who, unlike Mr. Lincoln, was not willing to be deceived by emotional appeals such as that of Mr. Prentice in behalf of an only son. In answer, the stern old Judge Advocate General filed the following caustic statement, which is a scrap of history in itself:

"JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S OFFICE, May 16, 1863.—THE SECRETARY OF WAR: Clarence J. Prentice, born and residing in Kentucky at the breaking out of the rebellion, left his home and entered the military service of the rebels, where by his zeal and efficiency as an officer he attained the rank of Major, which position he now holds. He joined in the recent military invasion of his native State, and having by some means not explained become separated from his command, he availed himself of the opportunity to make a clandestine visit to his father's house in Louisville, where he was captured. The authorities have not thought proper to proceed against him as a spy, but have treated him as a prisoner of war, and as such he is now confined in Camp Chase. His father, speaking of him in a letter to the President, says he desires, I know, to serve no longer in the war, and in consideration of this seeming weariness of the crime in which he has been engaged he asks that on his taking the simple oath of a non-combatant he may be allowed to go anywhere outside of the United States and of the rebel Confederacy."

Clarence J. Prentice himself has made no communication to the Government expressive of his feelings in regard to the war or of his future plans or purposes. When prisoners of war are willing to take the oath of allegiance it is the practice to permit them to do so. When they are not thus willing, they have been invariably exchanged under the cartel. The immediate course now proposed has not been pursued because the Government would thereby lose the advantage of the exchange, and because no satisfactory or reliable guarantee would exist that the prisoners thus tenderly dealt with would not at the first opportunity re-enter the rebel military service. Doubtless investigation would show that the treason of many officers and soldiers in the rebel armies is palliated by the pressure of an excited public sentiment, and by the military despotism to which they have been subjected. Such, however, was not the case of Clarence J. Prentice. He left his home in a State then and still loyal, and voluntarily and wantonly banded with traitors for the overthrow of his country. It is for the Secretary to determine whether the established policy which has prevailed in the treatment of prisoners of war shall be modified in his favor.

J. HOLT,  
"Judge Advocate General."

### DECLINED TO TAKE THE OATH.

But on the 13th—in fact three days before Judge Holt wrote to Secretary Stanton—Prentice had already, through Mr. Lincoln's interposition, been sent from Camp Chase to City Point for exchange. On the elder Prentice's representations, the President's first plan was to let Clarence take the oath and go abroad, but this offer he declined, choosing rather to rejoin the Confederate army, despite the anxious father's earnest protestations of his desire to serve no longer in the war—that he would "never bear arms against us again"—thus justifying the cold but keen discernment of Judge Holt.

This has somewhat the appearance of double-dealing on the part of Geo. D. Prentice. The fact is, he was very much frightened

for the personal safety of a son for whom he appeared to have borne an almost frantic affection. Some vindictive Kentucky Unionists, whom in the past he had lashed with his bitter editorial pen, were desirous to even up with their old enemy by having the son tried and shot as a spy. It may well be imagined that under this pressure of fear and impending disgrace, the pleadings of his father and perhaps mother and wife, probably wrung

from the son some half-hearted, quasi promises to desert his cause, which were greedily and thankfully hurried off to Mr. Lincoln. Clarence soon found that he could not conscientiously and honorably make these promises good. No doubt the elder Prentice acted in the utmost good faith.

However all this may be, the father's prayer was granted, and for a time all went well again. But it was not long ere the young hot-head needed the help of his influential Union father again, this time on both sides of the line. In September, 1864, by consent of the Richmond authorities, Geo. D. Prentice was permitted to pass through the Confederate lines to Pound Gap, in the Cumberland Mountains, to visit his son, who was there stationed. This visit was occasioned by some serious difficulty into which Clarence had fallen, the nature of which is not made apparent in the correspondence. Returning home via Richmond and Washington, in which capitals he held consultations with the leading men of both sides, we find him again appealing for the aid of President Lincoln in behalf of his son Clarence as follows:

"LOUISVILLE, January 21, 1865.—MR. PRESIDENT LINCOLN: Mr. President, you were very kind in your assurances as to what you would do when I could give you the necessary information as to the witnesses desired in my son's case—on trial for his life at Abingdon. Well, one witness, and an all-important witness, is Capt. R. H. Baptist, a prisoner of war at Johnson's Island, a poor fellow who has been an invalid for the past year. My son is innocent, and Capt. Baptist, as honorable an officer as the Confederates ever had, can establish his entire innocence. So I ask, Mr. President, not simply in my own name, not only in behalf of abstract justice, but also in behalf of a very gallant young boy exposed improperly to mortal peril, that you parole Capt. R. H. Baptist from Johnson's Island to the Southern Confederacy. Most respectfully yours, GEO. D. PRENTICE."

What steps, if any, Mr. Lincoln took in this last matter is now unknown, but from the well-known generosity and patience of his character it is morally certain the boon was granted. And whatever the peril, the son eventually passed through it unscathed to surrender at the end of the war, for after all was over he soon turned up at Chattanooga a suppliant for permission to return to his home and resume the pursuits of peace.

There was some sticking on the part of Secretary Stanton about this application, and considerable telegraphing to and fro before the matter was finally adjusted, but the privilege of renewing his allegiance to the United States was finally granted young Prentice through Gen. Thomas, then commanding at Nashville, about May 11, 1865, after which he rejoined his family in Louisville. Of his subsequent career I know nothing. George D. Prentice, the father, died in 1870.

LESLIE J. PRIORY.

APRIL, 1903

## LINCOLN'S LAST OFFICIAL ACT

He Pardoned a Young Man Who Had Been  
Condemned to Death as a Confederate Spy

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S last official act was to pardon a man under sentence of death, charged with being a Confederate spy. Before the Civil War, Allmon and George Vaughan were residents of Canton, Missouri. Allmon entered the Union army. His brother espoused the cause of the Confederacy, and in due time he became a member of the staff of General Mark E. Green, an old friend and neighbor. George Vaughan, after the battle of Shiloh, undertook a secret visit to his home at Canton. He wished to see his own family and to carry messages to the wife of General Green. He passed undiscovered through the Union lines, spent some days in Canton, and was returning to his command when he was captured and jailed at Palmyra, Missouri, but was soon transferred to St. Louis. There he was tried by court-martial, and, though he stoutly denied that he entered the Union lines for other than the purposes already named, was sentenced to be shot as a spy.

Allmon Vaughan, who was then a captain in the Union army, appealed to Senator John B. Henderson to save his brother. Henderson laid the case before Edwin M. Stanton, who, after investigation, decided that George Vaughan was guilty and that there could be no change in the sentence that had been passed upon him. Then Henderson appealed to Mr. Lincoln, at whose instance an order was issued for a new trial. This resulted in a second verdict of guilty. Again appeal was made to the President, who ordered still another trial, but a third time a court-martial pronounced against the accused man's innocence.

Henderson, however, continued the fight for the young man's life. It was in the spring of 1865, and, in urging the President to exercise clemency, the senator insisted that, the war being practically over, Vaughan's pardon would be in the interest of peace and conciliation. "See Stanton, and tell him this man must be released," said Mr. Lincoln. "I have seen Stanton, and he will do nothing," protested Henderson. "See him again," was the reply; "and, if he will do nothing, come back to me." Stanton would do nothing, and, early in the evening of April 14, Henderson again sought the President, whom he found dressed for the theater. Mr. Lincoln shook his head, when the senator reported the outcome of his interview with Stanton; then, without a word, he seated himself at his desk, wrote a few lines on a sheet of paper, and handed it to Henderson. It was an order for Vaughan's unconditional release and pardon, and it was the last official act of the President's life.

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## How a Lincoln Saved a Lee

An Unpublished Incident of the Late  
Civil War.

The Washington Post is authority for the following story:

President Lincoln's magnanimous disposition and kindly nature were never better exemplified than in a case during the Civil war in which two sons of the Confederate chieftain, Robert E. Lee, were involved. As narrated by one of the most hospitable and typical Virginians, himself a scion of a family noted for brave deeds and heroic sacrifices, the story of Lincoln and the Lees reveals a depth of fraternal affection, chivalry and heroism of which Americans may justly be proud, no matter what state may claim their allegiance.

On the occasion to which reference has been made, post-prandial cigars had been lighted, and a congenial company of Northern and Southern men were deep in a discussion of the merits of the martyred Lincoln. "There is a piece of history which seems to have escaped Northern and Southern writers," remarked the host, "and that is an incident involving Lincoln and the two sons of 'Marse Robert,' as Gen. Lee was familiarly termed by his army. I have been an omnivorous reader of history connected with the Civil war of 1861-5, but nowhere have I encountered any mention even of the incident I am about to relate."

"It was after the battle of Brandy Station, in which Brig. Gen. W. H. F. Lee, called by his father and family 'Rooney' Lee, was not only badly wounded, but captured by the Federal forces. Upon being taken to the headquarters of the Union army his identity became known, and there was consequently great rejoicing over such a capture. Subsequently a federal officer who had been captured by the Confederates was shot under peculiar circumstances, and the captors of Rooney Lee determined that he should be executed by way of retaliation. A day had been fixed when he was to be shot at sunrise. In some manner Maj. Gen. Washington Parke Custis Lee, who once owned the Arlington estate, which was subsequently made a national cemetery by the United States government, learned of his brother's peril. By means of a flag of truce, Custis Lee appeared at the headquarters of the Union commander, who cordially received him and inquired the nature of his visit."

"To save my brother's life, if possible," was the reply, "and return him to his wife and children. You must know, general," continued Custis Lee, "I am a bachelor, and not only that, but I outrank my brother, who is a brigadier general, while I am a major general. If any one is to suffer for the unfortunate occurrence by which one of your officers forfeited his life, let the blow fall upon me. There will be no one to grieve and worry about me, for I am a single man and a soldier, able and willing to abide by the arbitrament of war. With my brother it is different, for he is a man of family, with a wife and four little ones awaiting him at home. He knows nothing of my visit, neither does our father, Gen. Robert E. Lee. Knowing both of

them as I do, it is my conjecture that if my purpose had been communicated to either of them, they would have endeavored to dissuade me from such an undertaking. Consequently I have come to your headquarters of my own volition, and without any advice whatever, either from my family or friends. Give me my brother's life for his family's sake, and take mine as a means of retaliation for a regrettable and unlooked-for act of war and its misery."

"Moved by this appeal, the Union general pointed out to his visitor that what he asked was not in his power to grant. 'Lots were drawn for the execution,' he said, 'and fate willed it that your brother should draw the fatal number. A time has been fixed for the execution, the necessary orders have been given, and it only remains to carry out the details. There is nobody to help you in your extremity unless President Lincoln at Washington sees fit to interfere.'

"This suggestion, coming from the source it did, aroused a gleam of hope within the bosom of Custis Lee, and he inquired of the federal commander whether it would be possible to stay the execution of the death sentence until President Lincoln could be informed of the circumstances."

"Most assuredly," was the reply, "and, furthermore, he shall be informed of your heroic and brotherly offer of sacrifice immediately."

"This officer kept faith to the letter," continued the narrator, "and sent a detailed account of his interview with Custis Lee to the president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Within a few hours after the message was received at Washington there came a reply from President Lincoln to the federal commander, saying: 'I know Custis Lee means what he says. Defer the execution of his brother until you receive further orders from me.'

"These orders never came," concluded the host, "for shortly afterward W. H. F. Lee was exchanged for a federal officer of the rank of a brigadier general, and at once set out to rejoin his family. His devoted wife in the meanwhile, learning the story of his capture and sentence, and having no means for ascertaining his subsequent whereabouts, had pined away and died. Scarlet fever carried off his four children, so that it was to a darkened and desolate fireside that Rooney Lee returned out of the jaws of death. He knew nothing at this time of the offer made by his brother to take his place, and it was not until long after the Civil war had ended that he learned what the big-hearted Abraham Lincoln had done."

"Is it any wonder," continued the narrator, "that men of the South revere the memory of Lincoln? It was the darkest day in our history when he fell by an assassin's act, and none deplored his untimely end more than brave 'Old Marse Robert' and his sons Custis and Rooney Lee, the last named afterward a congressman at Washington. A son of Rooney Lee, by a subsequent marriage, is now a member of the Virginia legislature, and as he bears the name of his grandsire worthily, he is an ideal Virginian, brave, chivalrous and gallant."

St Paul Pioneer Press

June 17, 1903

*The Memphis  
News-Scimitar  
2/12/09*

# LINCOLN SAVED HER HUSBAND

MEMPHIS WOMAN HONORS  
DEAD PRESIDENT BECAUSE  
OF REMARKABLE AND UN-  
WRITTEN INCIDENT IN LIFE.

Though born in Tennessee and reared in the vicinity of Memphis, Mrs. M. E. Brand, 217 Adams avenue, one of the wealthiest women in the South previous to the war between the states, is observing the centenary anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln with as much enthusiasm as can be noticed anywhere. Tender memories cling about the name of Lincoln to Mrs. Brand, who says he was at once a great and kindly man and a good president.

Mrs. Brand is the widow of the late John Brand, who was a member of Gen. Morgan's command during the late war. In the progress of some sharp skirmishing in the vicinity of Cincinnati, toward the end of the war, Mr. Brand was dangerously wounded and taken prisoner by the federal army. He was confined to the federal prison at Columbus, Ohio, and was not expected to recover.

## Goes to Washington.

His mother, a Lexington (Ky.) woman, had been a schoolmate of Ann Eliza Todd, President Lincoln's wife, and on hearing her son was in a federal prison and dangerously wounded, hastened to Washington and sought an audience with President Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln insisted on the elder Mrs. Brand remaining as a guest at the White House until arrangements could be made to secure the release of Mrs. Brand's son.

President Lincoln, through the war department, had the wounded man taken from the Columbus prison and conveyed to the White House, as soon as he was able to travel, and compelled the young soldier who wore the gray to remain at the White House with his mother until he was restored to health. He was later permitted to return to his home.

Mrs. Brand, of Memphis, who tells the story, declares that she can never forget the kindness of President Lincoln to her husband, who, though a Confederate, received the tenderest care the White House could give.

Mrs. Brand was a Miss Roselle, and at one time owned an immense amount of property in Memphis and Shelby county and some rich plantation land in Mississippi.



## Lincoln Releases Alexander Stephens' Nephew.

MRS. MYRTA LOCKETT AVARY, writing in the Century Magazine a few months ago, said: Visiting not long ago at the home of my friend, Dr. Robert Grier Stephens of Atlanta, Ga., I noticed on the wall of his favorite room a framed letter. In one corner of the frame was also a photograph of the size usual before "cabinets" came in vogue. The photograph bore the name of Abraham Lincoln in his own handwriting; the letter, also in Mr. Lincoln's handwriting, read thus:

Executive Mansion, Washington, Feb. 10, 1865. The Hon. A. H. Stephens—According to our agreement your nephew, Lieut. Stephens, goes to you, bearing this note. Please, in return, to select and send me that officer of the same rank, imprisoned at Richmond, whose physical condition most urgently requires his release. Respectfully,

A. LINCOLN.

I asked the history of the letter and the photograph, and I will try to repeat it in the simple, unstudied phrases in which I heard it from the niece of Alexander H. Stephens, the daughter of him who is mentioned in the letter as "Lieut. Stephens."

The Hampton Roads peace conference of 1865, at which Mr. Stephens, Judge J. A. Campbell, and Mr. R. M. T. Hunter met Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward in an effort to establish peace between the north and south, and so to put an end to bloodshed, had ended in failure. Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Stephens had met in 1847, when both were members of congress, and something like warm personal friendship had developed between them; this was strengthened at Hampton Roads. When they came to say good-by the president of the United States remarked with feeling to the vice president of the confederacy:

"Well, Stephens, there has been nothing we could do for our country. Is there anything I can do for you personally?"

"Nothing." Then the vice president's pale face brightened. "Unless you can send me my nephew, who has been for twenty months a prisoner on Johnson's Island."

Mr. Lincoln's face also brightened. "I shall be glad to do it. Let me have his name." He took the name down in his notebook.

When he returned to Washington he telegraphed to Johnson's Island, directing that Lieut. Stephens be put on his parole, with orders to report at once to President Lincoln in Washington.

An officer came into the prison and called out:

"Lieut. John A. Stephens of Georgia!"

The lieutenant had no idea what was wanted of him; he thought he was being called out to be shot. He had been captured at the siege of Vicksburg, and had been imprisoned five months in New Orleans and then carried to Johnson's Island.

When he reported at headquarters he was told that he was to report at once to President Lincoln. So he was driven across the ice on Lake Erie in a sleigh twenty miles to Sandusky, and went on to Washington.

There at once he sought the president, and, having sent in his name, he was immediately ushered into Mr. Lincoln's presence. He found the president sitting on a table in a half-reclining position and talking with Secretary Seward. Mr. Lincoln rose, shook his hand cordially, and said:

"I saw your uncle, the Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, recently at Hampton Roads."

Lieut. Stephens had not heard of the peace conference, and this was his first direct news of his family since his imprisonment. President Lincoln continued:

"I told your uncle I would send you to him, lieutenant."

Naturally, the lieutenant was deeply moved and grateful.

"You have the freedom of the city," Mr. Lincoln continued, "as long as you please to remain here. When you want to go home let me know and I will pass you through the lines."

The lieutenant's appreciation and joy can be imagined. Mr. Lincoln talked on pleasantly, telling him of the Hampton Roads conference, asking him questions, and making the hour a memorable one in many ways.

The lieutenant remained in Washington about two weeks. Many old friends entertained him, and he was in a state of mind and body to set value on such a show of good-will.

## HIS MODEST REPLY TO PRAISE.

Answering Bishop Simpson, He Said That the Credit, if Any, Belonged to God.

Bishop Simpson, who was a close friend of President Lincoln, once wrote him regarding a certain plan of action and advised its adoption. Mr. Lincoln, with his wonderful prophetic sagacity, foresaw that the bishop's suggestions were impracticable, and so stated to the bishop by letter, closing it with these words: "I know that I am right, for God is directing me, and I must follow divine guidance." The bishop's reply indicated his great love and respect for Mr. Lincoln. He said in part: "Mr. President, God's wisdom is greater than yours, yours is greater than mine, infinite intelligence must control, upon the altar of your country's redemption, sustained by the sanction of the most high, you have laid the rich gifts of your genius, the genius of unselfish devotion, and have taught me the secret of your power and greatness. I, too, reverence the God whom you worship and obey, and I humbly bow to a sanctified intellect such as yours, as I do to nothing else on earth."

Mr. Lincoln, with characteristic modesty, replied: "Bishop, since you give God the glory of my achievements I am content; may I ever have the strength to do his will." At one time during the summer of 1863 Secretary of War Stanton called upon Mr. Lincoln at the White house to consult the president as to whether he should place Gen. Hooker or Gen. Crook in command. Mr. Lincoln replied, "Mr. Secretary, you will employ any and every means to hold that position, but let it be understood that the position must be held," then, with a sly twinkle, added, "either by Hook—or by Crook."



## REFUSES TO SIGN DEATH WARRANTS

Certain hard-boiled gentry of the present time might well unbend and emulate the humane example of Lincoln. A personal friend of President Lincoln said: "I called on him one day in the early part of the war. He had just written a pardon for a young man who had been sentenced to be shot, for sleeping at his post, as a sentinel. -He remarked as he read it to me:

"I could not think of going into eternity with the blood of the poor young man on my skirts." Then he added: 'It is not to be wondered at that a boy, raised on a farm, probably in the habit of going to bed at dark, should, when required to watch, fall asleep; and I cannot consent to shoot him for such an act.'"

This story, with its moral, is made complete by Rev. Newman Hall, of London, who, in a sermon preached after and upon Mr. Lincoln's death, says that the dead body of this youth was found among the slain on the field of Fredericksburg, wearing next his heart a photograph of his preserver, beneath which the grateful fellow had written, "God bless President Lincoln!"

From the same sermon another anecdote is gleaned, of a similar character, which is evidently authentic. An officer of the army, in conversation with the preacher, said:

"The first week of my command there were twenty-four deserters sentenced by court-martial to be shot, and the warrants

for their execution were sent to the President to be signed. He refused. I went to Washington and had an interview. I said:

"Mr. President, unless these men are made an example of, the army itself is in danger. Mercy to the few is cruelty to the many."

He replied: 'Mr. General, there are already too many weeping widows in the United States. For God's sake, don't ask me to add to the number, for I won't do it.'"

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## -SHOOTING WOULD DO NO GOOD

A New York congressman received a telegram one evening from the army to the effect that a young townsman who had been induced to enlist through his instrumentality had, for serious demeanor, been convicted by a court martial and was to be shot the next day. Greatly agitated, the congressman went to the Secretary of War and urged, in the strongest manner, a reprieve. Stanton coldly declined.

"Too many cases of this kind had been let off," said he, "and it was time an example was made."

Exhausting his eloquence in vain, the congressman said:

"Well, Mr. Secretary, the boy is not going to be shot, of that I give you fair warning!"

Leaving the War department, he went directly to the White House, although the hour was late. The sentinel on duty told him that special orders had been given to admit no one whatever that night.

After a long parley, by pledging himself to assume the responsibility of the act, the congressman passed in. Mr. Lincoln had retired, but indifferent to etiquette or ceremony, the congressman pressed his way through all obstacles to his sleeping apartment. In an excited manner he stated that the dispatch announcing the hour of execution had just reached him.

"This man must not be shot, Mr. President," said he. "I can't help what he may have done. Why, he is an old neighbor of mine; I can't allow him to be shot!"

Mr. Lincoln had remained in bed, quietly listening to the protestations of his old friend (they were in Congress together). He at length said:

"Well, I don't believe shooting will do him any good. Give me that pen."

And so saying, "red tape" was unceremoniously cut, and another poor fellow's life was indefinitely extended.

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## Saved by President Lincoln. 1512

New York Evening Post: Justice Horace H. Lurton, who read the decision in the anthracite coal roads case, is the fourth ex-confederate soldier to be appointed to the supreme court bench. He was a member of Morgan's raiders. How he was saved in the war by Abraham Lincoln's generosity and kindness, the justice has told himself. He said:

"In the civil war there was a prisoner of war on Johnson's island, in Lake Erie. He had been in the hospital six months, and on the card at the head of his bed was the dread word 'tuberculosis.' The boy's mother made her way from Tennessee to Washington, and on February 22, 1865, she saw that great president, Abraham Lincoln.

"Mr. President," she said to him, 'my boy is doomed to death unless I can get him back to Tennessee. I want to take him home.' That big hearted, generous man, said 'I will parole him on sick leave.'

"But," she said, 'then it will be too late. I want to take him home with me.' And President Lincoln wrote a note; 'Let the boy go home with his mother.'

"That boy was the justice who has the honor of being the circuit justice of the Second district of the United States."

# MOTHER'S APPEAL GRANTED

## Assistant Attorney General, Son of Man Who Was Saved

### EXCHANGED FOR A SPY

#### Two Southern Girls' Stories of Saving Confederate Prisoners After Others Had Failed.

By HORACE GREEN.

**T**WO intimate and unpublished versions of Abraham Lincoln, concealed for sixty years in the diaries of two venerable Southern ladies, the late Mrs. Waldo P. Goff and the living Mrs. Frank Hume, have been unearthed during the past fortnight in the mining regions of West Virginia. These close descriptions not only contradict the historical picture of Mr. Lincoln as an uncouth man's man, ill at ease in feminine presence, and lacking "those little links (of feeling) which go to make up the chain of a woman's happiness"; but on the contrary confirm the impression of the martyred President as a man susceptible to feminine influence.

Both Mrs. Goff and Mrs. Hume, the former a mother of a Union veteran, the latter's family allegiance split by the Civil War, brought influence to bear on Mr. Lincoln, and finally saw him personally. Both succeeded in their mission, after petitions, political pressure and masculine efforts had failed.

Curlously enough, the respective family homesteads today occupy adjoining lots in the picturesque town of Clarksburg, W. Va., tucked in the mountains of Harrison County.

#### The Love Affairs of Lincoln.

Since, as O. Henry maintained, nothing Southern can be understood without its background, a word is advisable regarding the origin of this information. A year ago THE NEW YORK TIMES Magazine printed an article on "The Love Affairs of Abraham Lincoln," the record of which had been for the greater part suppressed by historians, with the exception of Ward H. Lamon and William H. Herndon. The writer submitted that, although inflexible to masculine control, the Great Emancipator was easily swayed by women. The result was a surprising number of confirma-

tory letters from original sources. One, for example, from the niece of Mrs. Lincoln's sister, who wrote: "It was always known in our family, as you have pointed out, that Mr. Lincoln courted Matilda Edwards, a fact which for many reasons she divulged only to her nearest and dearest." (This episode followed the affairs with Ann Rutledge and Mary Owen, and was between the time of Lincoln's original engagement to and final marriage with Mary Todd of Kentucky).

Nine months later came another clue in a letter from Mrs. Emma Hume Horner of Clarkeburg, daughter of Mrs. Frank Hume of Washington, who mentioned parenthetically that her mother's interview with Mr. Lincoln fifty-eight years ago had been written down "just as she told it." A trip through the snow-clad mountains of Hurd County was necessary to convince the owners of the propriety of letting the material be published. The "Bob" Lamon who arranged the interview was a brother of the biographer, Ward H. Lamon.

Mrs. Hume is one of the few living persons who have talked with the Civil War leader. The charm which persuaded Lincoln is heightened today in the vibrant, white-haired figure. But you must picture her as she was on that day, a slip of a girl in her teens, in white frock and dark curls, parted in the middle. This is the account she gave after General Lee had laid down his arms:

"The surrender had taken place. The war-worn troops were already being discharged and had returned by thousands to their homes. There came a very sad and urgent appeal to my father to do his uttermost to procure the release

from Fort Delaware, near Philadelphia, of the Southern soldiers who were confined there. Many of the men were ill, and already death had claimed its bitter toll.

"My father tried every way he could to see Mr. Lincoln, as we Southerners called him, to place his petition before him; but having been such an ardent Southern sympathizer, his requests were of no avail. My mother during the entire war had been head of one of the Southern relief societies to send to all prisoners food, clothing or anything else which could make more endurable the confinement in the Old Capitol. A list was published every day of the new prisoners, the Southern ladies got the names, so many names were allotted to each member, and each member wrote, signing herself 'your affectionate Aunt, Cousin,' &c., &c.

"Of all the thousands of men there was only one who did not understand the ruse, but wrote thanking mother, saying he could not find out where he was connected with the family either on his mother's or father's side, since he had always lived in New Jersey and had no relatives down South.

"Oh, I Can Fix That!"

"One day father returned greatly distressed, and told us he had given up presenting his appeal to the President. I shall always remember how sad he looked, and I must have reflected his dejected air, thinking of all those young men suffering so and of the heartaches of their mothers, sisters and sweethearts, when I heard the voice of my friend, Mr. 'Bob' Lamon, who was the Clerk of the Supreme Court, 'What on earth is the matter with you?' I told him the sad news and Mr. Lamon said, 'Oh! I can fix that up; we will get my brother, Marshal Lamon, to see the President.' You remember that the District of Columbia was governed by a Marshal during the sixties.

"Well, Mr. Lamon and I drove in a carriage to the front door of the Executive Mansion—the name White House was only given to the home of the President during the Roosevelt régime. We went in the huge front door, and such a lot of people! Men in old faded uniforms, immaculately dressed army officers, courtly diplomats, politicians, &c., &c. Marshal Lamon met us and took us up a flight of stairs, which were on the left of the building, into an ante-room of the President's office, which was then on the second floor at the head of the stairs. After waiting a few moments the clerk appeared and ushered us into Mr. Lincoln's private office.

"There sat President Abraham Lincoln, his sombre face in full profile to the door. He was dressed in that familiar drooping black coat and cross-tie, just like the pictures—only more so. One knee was crossed over the other and I remember a long, flat foot sticking into the air. I glanced around the room, but could hardly see or hear anything, I was so frightened. All I knew was that I was before, and being introduced to, one of the greatest men in the North! But oh! when I felt that firm, strong handclasp and heard that softly modulated, clear voice and looked into those kind, tired, sad eyes, all fear vanished.

"Recovering my self-possession, I showed the appeal and the list of names of Southern soldiers, all of whom had now sworn their allegiance to the Union. I told the President about one of my brothers who had fought all four years for the Union and now had returned safely home, and all these young men just dying and suffering so, and that they were friends of Mr. Lamon's and mine, &c. President Lincoln carefully read the appeal and looked over the list. For a moment he sat absent-mindedly. He had some keys which he turned around and around in his hands, and looking up at me at last he said: 'Ah! I see no reason why these young men should not be released at once and returned to their homes to take up their lives and become good and honorable citizens. For they have surely shown the courage of their convictions. But now I know they are ready to do their best to make a perfect United States.'

#### Queen of Love and Beauty.

"The President wrote an order and I left. Shortly after this interview my father received an official announcement that the soldiers had been released and had gone to their homes. I once visited the town where many of these young men lived, and you know they made me have a wonderful time.

"They crowned me at a tournament the Queen of Love and Beauty." Even more evidential and confirmed



in War Department records is the story of how Mrs. Waldo P. Goff saved her son from the firing squad. This son was Major Nathan Goff, later Brigadier General of Volunteers, United States Circuit Judge, Secretary of the Navy in President Hayes's Cabinet, and United States Senator from 1913 to 1919. Guy D. Goff, Assistant Attorney General in President Harding's Cabinet, is a son.

Young Major Goff—he was 21 at the time—took part in an engagement at Moorefield, Hardy County, West Virginia in the Winter of '64. While fighting with Company G, Virginia Union Infantry, Goff's horse was shot from under him. He was captured and sent to Libby Prison. Just before the engagement at Moorefield a Confederate spy from the neighboring county, Major Ormsby, had been captured, court-martialed and sentenced to hang. No sooner was this known than the Confederates sent word to the Union commander that Goff was held as hostage for Ormsby, and would be shot if the sentence against Ormsby were carried out.

Ormsby's captors were in a predicament. Death was, of course, the penalty for a spy; the case appears to have been clear-cut, but the Confederate threat meant business. For weeks Major Goff lived in the shadow of death. The calibre of the man, his clear perception as well as valor, is seen in a letter written by him to the Commander-in-Chief. It is now on file in the War Department.

"If Major Ormsby is guilty he should be executed, regardless of its consequences to me. The life of a single soldier, no matter who he may be, should not stand in the way of adherence to a principle."

The record adds laconically, "Released in exchange, per order dated . . ."

The gap is filled by Mrs. R. S. Lownes, Goff's sister. She sits erect and gracious, before the most hospitable open fire in Clarksburg, fingering a scrapbook to refresh her memory:

"My mother heard that Major Ormsby and her son were to be shot in one week. She started for Washington, going part of the way by coach. She arrived at dusk on the third day and went directly to the Executive Mansion, where she was last in the line. When she finally reached the Presidential study every one was gone except the clerk. But in the corner of the room she noticed a huge figure slouched in a

chair, gazing toward the river. She sat down and mechanically told her story. When she got through, the President turned toward her. He had not heard a single word. Again she appealed for Nathan's life.

"The President called for the papers on the case. He looked through them carefully and turned, speaking gently but irrevocably.

"Madam, I regret profoundly that nothing can be done." He explained that her own son had summed the matter up—that the Union was not responsible for whatever action the Confederates might take.

#### Lost All Self-Control.

"Suddenly mother lost all self-control at the prospect of her boy's cold-blooded murder. She doesn't know what put the idea into her head; she may have seen Tad or Robert playing on the ground; she turned, furious:

"If your boy or General Grant's boy were condemned to death, Mr. Lincoln, you can't tell me a-a-anything would stand in the way. I love my boy as much as you do yours."

"She was horror-struck at what she had said and started to go. The President's back was turned. A long pause, and he faced her. To her astonishment, his face radiated the happiest smile she had ever seen.

"You have shown me a way out, madam," he said, and producing an old envelope from his pocket, scribbled something with his initials on the back. Mother persisted on getting some kind of an order, but the President advised her to try the envelope on General Meigs.

"My signature," he suggested, with another smile, "is sometimes considered useful." My mother did as told. My brother and Major Ormsby were released within the week."

The sequel of the double release is noteworthy. Major Goff returned to his regiment, Ormsby to his. In a battle skirmish shortly thereafter, Major Ormsby was captured in battle and confined in the county jail at Clarksburg. A mob surrounded the jail, crying, "We have the spy, now hang him." Major Goff got wind of it, galloped to town and mounted the Court House steps.

"Let no friend of mine lay hand on

this man," he cried. "He is now a prisoner of war and entitled to our protection." Both episodes, according to Senator Goff's admirers, evidence at that early age the sense of justice—even where his own life was concerned—which so well became him in later life as Justice of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals.

More deeply does the evidence portray certain characteristics of the Great Emancipator. Alonzo Rothschild chose "Lincoln—Master of Men," as the title of a critical work which no student should fail to read. From increasing testimony it appears that he was sometimes mastered by women.



- 13 BATES, Edward. Attorney General in Lincoln's Cabinet. A.L.S. 2 pp.,  
8vo. Washington, June 13, 1864. To Gideon Welles. \$7.50

FINE LETTER from Lincoln's Attorney General to the Secretary of the Navy, requesting the release of a young Confederate prisoner of war, the son of a Union officer, a friend of Bates. It reads in part: "On behalf of Captain Shock I applied personally to the President (Lincoln) to release his son and give him back to the anxious father. The President, knowing little himself of the parties, did not choose to act definitely upon his own generous promptings, but promised me to grant the favor to Capt. Shock, if you would ask it." Etc. Madison - 1939

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
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## LINCOLN AND IMPRISONED MEN

Leonard Swett and Ebenezer Peck, two of Lincoln's old friends have given us a general idea of the President's attitude toward northern soldiers under the sentence of death. The former related that on a Thursday, while visiting Mr. Lincoln at the White House he was driven from the room with this explanation: "Get out of the way Swett, tomorrow is butcher-day and I must go through these papers and see if I cannot find some excuse to let these poor men off." Peck happened to be with the President on a Friday when he exclaimed: "This is Friday, black Friday, hangman's day! This day they execute farmers' boys for falling asleep at their posts down on the Potomac."

Many stories are in circulation of Lincoln's clemency with respect to northern boys condemned to death, but not quite so much attention has been paid to the President's clemency toward prisoners of war, the farmers' boys on the other side of the Mason-Dixon line. Because of limited space, but a very few of a great many episodes available can be mentioned. By selecting widely divergent cases they may serve as a memorial to hundreds of such instances where Lincoln came to the rescue of imprisoned men.

### Hospitality Returned

While the editor of *Lincoln Lore* was living at Morganfield, Union County, Kentucky, he learned for the first time of the President's only political speaking itinerary in his native state, and it consisted of but one address in the above named town. Although there are different versions of the following letter written to Mr. Lincoln, there is no doubt about the release of the old Whig advocate, who had been imprisoned for his boldly expressed opinions favoring the newly formed Confederacy. Here is the letter with its Lincoln endorsement:

"My Dear Mr. President: After presenting my compliments to you I wish to remind you that a good many years ago I had you in tow at a Whig barbecue in Union county, Ky. On that occasion I tried to treat you kindly, and even burst my cannon in firing a salute in your honor. I hope you have not forgotten it. Now, sir, you have me in tow, and I am your prisoner here in Camp Chase. I am lonesome and homesick, and want to get back to my old wife. Please let me go. Yours truly, George W. Riddle."

When Mr. Lincoln received this letter he is said to have laughed heartily, and at once wrote on the back of the letter: "Please let Capt. George Riddle go home."

"A. Lincoln."

Alexander H. Stephens' Nephew

When Alexander H. Stephens, vice-president of the Confederacy, and

Abraham Lincoln were parting after the Hampton Roads conference, Lincoln asked Stephens if there was any personal favor he could show him. Stephens replied, "Nothing unless you can send me my nephew who for twenty months has been a prisoner on John-son's Island." Lincoln telegraphed to the prison and asked to have Lieut. John A. Stephens, of Georgia, report to him at Washington. Lincoln informed him of the conversation with his uncle, and an exchange of prisoners was accomplished.

### The President and Two Secretaries

The release from imprisonment of a young Confederate, the son of a Union officer, required the collaboration of the President and two of his secretaries. Attorney General Bates appealed to Lincoln for the boy's release and then wrote the following note to Secretary Welles:

"On behalf of Captain Shock I applied personally to the President to release his son and give him back to his anxious father. The President, knowing little himself of the parties did not choose to act definitely upon his own generous prompting, but promised to grant the favor to Capt. Shock if you would ask it."

### The Son of George D. Prentice

The famous editor of the *Louisville, Kentucky, Journal*, had an only child, Clarence G. Prentice, who became a Confederate Major. He was captured while on a secret visit to his family, and imprisoned at Camp Chase. The elder Prentice wrote to the President a long letter concluding with this appeal:

"I do not suppose, Mr. Lincoln, that you can parole my boy, upon taking the non-combatants' oath, to remain in the United States, though I should be most happy if you could. But I fervently appeal to you to let him go, upon his taking the simple oath, anywhere outside of the United States and of the rebel Confederacy. I know his plans. His mother will go with him, and he will never bear arms against us again. I will be surety for this with fortune and life."

Lincoln, relying on the father's good faith, was about to let Clarence take the oath and go abroad, when the younger man refused to comply with his father's pledge. The result was that he was exchanged for a northern prisoner of like rank.

### A Little Rebel's Brother

A few years ago while at Norfolk, Virginia, on a speaking itinerary, the director of the Lincoln Foundation was interviewed by a member of the staff of the *Norfolk Ledger*. This is the story as it was written down at the time:

"My grandmother was Thalia Francis Wildman, when a small child, her brother, John Burdit, was made a rebel prisoner. She went with her mother to ask for the release of the boy. When the President asked her to come and sit on his knee she was not afraid because he had a kind face. Lincoln told her that she would have her brother back again."

### A Supreme Court Judge

A Confederate prisoner of war on Johnson Island had been confined in the hospital for six months and a card at the head of his bed indicated that he was tubercular. The boy was from Tennessee and his mother, learning of his condition, made her way to Washington to see the President. On February 22nd, 1865, she secured an interview which is reported in this language:

"'Mr. President,' she said to him, 'my boy is doomed to death unless I can get him back to Tennessee. I want to take him home.'"

"That big-hearted, generous man said, 'I will parole him on sick leave.' 'But,' she said, 'then it will be too late. I want to take him home with me.' And President Lincoln wrote a note which said, 'Let the boy go home with his mother.'"

That boy, who went home with his mother, was nursed back to health and when a vacancy occurred in the United States Supreme Court, President Taft appointed to the position, Horace H. Lurton, of Tennessee, who thirty-one years before Lincoln had paroled to his mother.

### Lincoln's Last War Order

On the night of April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was just about to leave for the theatre with his wife, when he was approached by Senator Henderson, with an appeal for the pardon of a Confederate prisoner by the name of George Vaughn, who had been arrested while visiting his home in Canton, Missouri. George had a brother Allmon who was in the Union army. George was charged with being a spy, and although denying any purpose in his journey, except a visit to parents and friends, he was found guilty. Stanton had absolutely refused to do anything for the Senator in the way of a pardon for the boy and he appealed again to Lincoln, whom he had consulted earlier in the day. The fact that the war was virtually over, apparently made it seem proper for the President to issue an order pardoning this Confederate soldier. This was Abraham Lincoln's last official act relating directly to the Civil War and it is significant in that it was related to the pardoning of an imprisoned Confederate soldier.



### Lincoln's Kindness

During the presidential campaign of 1840, Lincoln, then a young man just rising into prominence, accepted an invitation to address an audience in Union county, Kentucky, at a Whig barbecue. He was met at a landing on the Ohio river, about ten miles from the place of the barbecue, by a committee, headed by Capt. George W. Riddle, and was escorted to the meeting, seated in a spring wagon by the side of Capt. Riddle, the driver. On the road Mr. Lincoln entertained the committee with several amusing anecdotes, and, on arriving at his destination, delivered an able and eloquent address.

After speaking, Capt. Riddle, who commanded a military company, fired a salute in honor of the orator of the day, but the cannon, an old six-pounder, was overcharged, and exploded, though without any serious results.

Many years passed. Mr. Lincoln was elected President, and the Civil War broke out. Capt. Riddle took sides with the South, and, having expressed his opinions rather boldly, was arrested for treason and sent to Camp Chase, a military prison. It proved to be a dull and gloomy place for Capt. Riddle, and, after he was there about ten days, he got homesick, and concluded he would remind his old friend Lincoln of bygone days. So he wrote him as follows:

"My Dear Mr. President: After presenting my compliments to you I wish to remind you that a good many years ago I had you in tow at a Whig barbecue in Union county, Ky. On that occasion I tried to treat you kindly, and even burst my cannon in firing a salute in your honor. I hope you have not forgotten it. Now, sir, you have me in tow, and I am your prisoner here in Camp Chase. I am lonesome and homesick, and want to get back to my old wife. Please let me go. Yours truly, George W. Riddle."

When Mr. Lincoln received this letter he laughed heartily, and at once wrote on the back of it, "Please let Capt. George Riddle go home. A. Lincoln."

*Comfort Magazine*



## THE BOY LINCOLN SENT HOME

IN the Civil War there was a prisoner of war on Johnson's Island, in Lake Erie. He had been in the hospital six months, and on the card at the head of his bed was the dread word "tuberculosis." The boy's mother made her way from Tennessee to Washington, and on February 22, 1865, she saw that great president, Abraham Lincoln.

"Mr. President," she said to him, "my boy is doomed to death unless I can get him back to Tennessee. I want to take him home."

That big-hearted, generous man said, "I will parole him on sick leave."

"But," she said, "then it will be too late. I want to take him home with me." And President Lincoln wrote a note, which said, "Let the boy go home with his mother."

Thirty-one years later that boy had become a man whose name—Horace H. Lurton—was honored throughout the land, and when President Taft looked about for a man to take a vacant place in the United States Supreme Court, he fixed on Judge Lurton. The appointment was made, and for four years the prisoner of war, who was sent home by President Lincoln, was a member of the greatest judicial body in the world.







